

STATINTL

# The Speechmaker

## *Senator Fulbright as the Arkansas de Tocqueville*

*by Andrew Kopkind*

For his troubles in detailing the errors of US foreign policy, Senator J. William Fulbright has been rewarded with a congressional resolution compounding the error and doubling his troubles. A few days after Fulbright delivered a characteristically long, intelligent, and eloquent condemnation of American intervention in the Dominican revolution, the House of Representatives passed (312 to 52) a sentimental endorsement of armed intervention anywhere in Latin America in the event of "subversive domination or the threat of it." The rebuke had the tacit approval of the State Department and bipartisan support of the House leadership.

It is not unusual for Fulbright to find himself on the short side of a six-to-one vote, and in his own way he derives a certain moral superiority from being a minority of one. "More than a hundred years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville warned us . . . of the dangers that might be expected from the 'tyranny of the majority.' . . . This is the tyranny that presently is growing in our country," Fulbright said in a doom-laden speech on McCarthyism 11 years ago. Last week, privately, he

repeated the same phrase, and predicted the same doom. He made his Senate speech not as a political leader but as an elder statesman-without-portfolio, an Arkansas de Tocqueville whose job it is not to make policy but to report it, and by reporting, influence in some small way its future course.

He has no taste for the heat of battle or the pitch of crisis. "At this time of relative calm," his speech began, "it is appropriate, desirable and, I think, necessary to review events in the Dominican Republic and the US role in those events. The purpose of such a review - and its only purpose - is to develop guidelines for wise and effective policies in the future." Fulbright removed himself as much as he could from the onus of personal criticism: President Johnson's decision to send 20,000 troops to Santo Domingo was understandable under the circumstances. There were "no easy choices." Nonetheless, it is the task of diplomacy to make wise decisions when they need to be made and US diplomacy failed to do so in the Dominican crisis.

The blame could not be placed on the President but

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